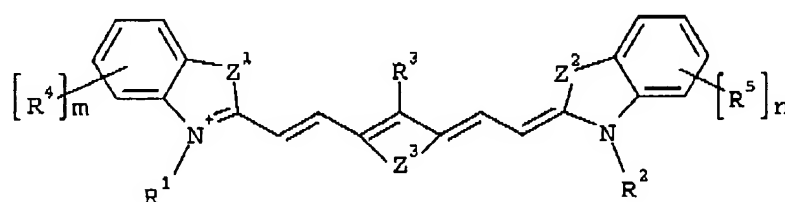


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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A heat-sensitive lithographic printing plate precursor comprising (i) a support having a hydrophilic surface or which is provided with a hydrophilic layer and (ii) a coating provided thereon, the coating comprising (a) an oleophilic layer which comprises a polymer that is soluble in an aqueous alkaline developer and (b) an infrared light absorbing compound according to the following formula :



wherein

- m and n each independently represent an integer from 0 to 4;
- Z¹ and Z² each independently represent one or two non-metallic atoms, which may be substituted, necessary to complete a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic ring;
- Z³ represents two or three non-metallic atoms, which may be substituted, necessary to complete a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic or carbocyclic ring;
- each R¹, R², R⁴ and R⁵ independently represent an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group, or a group selected from -G¹, -L¹-G¹, -CN, a halogen, -NO₂, -ORₐ, -CO-Rₐ, -CO-O-Rₐ, -O-CO-Rₐ, -CO-NRₐRₑ, -NRₐRₑ, -NRₐ-CO-Rₑ, -NRₐ-CO-O-Rₑ, -NRₐ-CO-NRₑRₑ, -SRₐ, -SO-Rₐ, -SO₂-Rₐ, -SO₂-O-Rₐ and -SO₂-NRₐRₑ; or wherein two adjacent R⁴ and R⁵ groups together form an optionally substituted 5- or 6-membered ring which is fused to the ring formed by Z¹ or Z²;
- R³ represents a hydrogen or a halogen atom, -L₂-G², an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, an aralkyl group, an aryl group, a thioalkyl group or a thioaryl group, each of said groups being optionally substituted;

with

- L₁ and L₂ being a divalent linking group;
- Rₐ, Rₑ and Rₑ being an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group;

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— R_d , R_e , and R_f being hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group;

wherein the solubilizing groups G^1 and G^2 are anionic or become anionic in an aqueous alkaline solution having a pH of at least 9 and wherein the total number of the solubilizing groups G^1 and G^2 is equal to three, four or five.

2. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein R^3 comprises at least one of said solubilizing groups.

3. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 and R^5 each comprise one of said solubilizing groups.

4. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the IR light absorbing compound comprises three solubilizing groups, of which one is comprised in each of R^1 , R^2 and R^3 .

5. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the IR light absorbing compound comprises three solubilizing groups, of which one is comprised in each of R^3 , R^4 and R^5 .

6. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the IR light absorbing compound comprises four solubilizing groups, of which one is comprised in each of R^1 , R^2 , R^4 and R^5 .

7. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein Z^1 and Z^2 are $-\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_2-$.

8. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein Z^3 is $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$ or $-(\text{CH}_2)_3-$.

9. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein R^3 is $-\text{Cl}$ or optionally substituted $-\text{S}-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$.

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10. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the solubilizing group is a carboxy group, a sulfo group or a hydroxy group, or salts thereof.

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.